

PREPARATION FOR THE BLESSED MONTH OF RAMADAN

A DISCOURSE BY :
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AHMED SAHIB KHANPURI
DAAMAT BARAKATUHUM

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A DISCOURSE BY

HADHRAT AQDAS MOULANA MUFTI AHMAD SAHEB KHANPURI دامت برکاتہم

SHEIKHUL HADITH AND CHIEF MUFTI OF

MADRASAH JAAMIAH ISLAAMIYYAH TAA'LIMUDEEN

DABHEL, SIMLAK, GUJARAT, INDIA

KHALIFAH OF FAQIHUL-UMMAH

HADHRAT AQDAS MUFTI MAHMOOD HASAN SAHEB GANGOHI رحمہ اللہ



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PREFACE

Alhamdulillah, it is through the special grace and favour of Allah Ta'aala that He has granted us the *taufeeq* and ability to embark on this noble mission of translating the discourses of our illustrious and noble *Sheikh* and Spiritual Mentor, *Hadhrat Aqdas Hibby wa Muhtaramy Moulana Mufti Ahmad Saheb Khanpuri* مدظلہ into the English language.

Due to the growing need and thirst for such literature in the English language which expounds upon the essence of *shariah* and ways and means of developing a true bond with one's Maker, Allah Ta'aala, and addressing the common maladies and ailments faced in this path together with their remedies which forms the basis of our *Sheikh's* teachings, the urgency of this task could not be more greatly emphasized.

Furthermore, it was the ardent desire of our noble *Sheikh* for a long time that these discourses be rendered into English due to the ever growing demand and requests abounding all the time in the different countries where our *Hadhrat* has travelled, which further pressed for this task to be undertaken.

May Allah Ta'aala make it such that we are able to fulfill the demands of this mammoth task in conveying the true sentiments as so passionately expressed by our illustrious *Sheikh* in his various discourses.

These discourses contain great volumes of knowledge and *ma'rifah* of Allah Ta'aala and are a result of a lifelong commitment in serving and reviving the plight of the *ummah*.

May Allah Ta'aala accord us the true appreciation of these pearls of wisdom and to read them with the intention of bringing them into practice.

Insha-Allah they will be a means of acquiring the *suhbah* (company) of the pious and righteous.

Much effort has been made to keep as close as possible to the original oratory style of the discourse as presented in *Urdu* and to maintain the essence of the discourse by preserving the original word as far as possible.

We also take this opportunity in expressing our appreciation unto our respected *Ustaadh Hadhrat Mufti* Muhammed Saeed *Saheb* for writing a brief biography of our *Sheikh* as contained in the ensuing pages.

Kindly attribute any errors and omissions to the credit of the publications team, and apprise us of the same (if any) in writing for consideration in future editions, if Allah Ta'aala wills.

May Allah Ta'aala firstly make it a means of our *islaah* and a means of general upliftment and benefit for the *ummah* at large.

Aameen.

We also request your duaas that Allah Ta'aala accepts this humble and broken effort and make it a stepping stone for many of the other valuable discourses of our *Mashaa'ikh* to be reproduced accordingly.

Muhammad Abubakr Minty

On behalf of

The Publications Department

Madrasah Mazaahir al Uloom al Islamiyyah

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11 Sha'baan 1433

01 July 2012

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

of

Hadhrat Aqdas, Sultanul Aarifeen, Sheikhul Mashaa'ikh, Ustaadhul Ulama, Faqeehul Asr, Moulana Mufti Ahmed Saheb Khanpuri دامت برکاتہم

by

Hadhrat Mufti Muhammad Saeed Motara Saheb دامت برکاتہم
of *Madrasah Arabia Islamia – Darul Uloom Azaadville*

Hadhrat Mufti Ahmed Saheb Khanpuri دامت برکاتہم is an internationally renowned scholar of the Islamic world. He hails from a village in *India* known as *Khanpur* which is situated in the *Jambusar* district of the *Bharuch* region in the *Gujarat* Province. It is with reference to this village that he is known to some people as *Mufti Khanpuri Saheb*.

Khanpur (with an "H" after the "K") should not be confused with *Kanpur* (without an "H") which is a city in the *U.P.* Province, well known for its leather industry.

Hadhrat Mufti Ahmed Saheb Khanpuri دامت برکاتہم's primary schooling and *Maktab Madrasah* studies were completed in his birth place of *Khanpur*. Thereafter, in pursuit of higher Islamic studies, he enrolled at *Madrasah Ashrafiyyah* which is a well known *Darul Uloom* in the *Rander* suburb of *Surat*. He was admitted in the said institute at the tender age of 12 and immediately set about studying *Urdu, Farsi* and Arabic Grammar.

He very quickly climbed up the ladder of success to excel in the various branches of Islamic sciences such as *Tafseer, Hadith, Fiqh* and Arabic Literature. During his nine-year academic career at this institute, he passed each year with distinction, always coming out at the top of his class.

He was a conscientious and hard working student who became the apple of the eye of all his *Asaatizah*. Some of his *Asaatizah* at the *Rander* Institute were mountains of knowledge such as *Hadhrat Sheikhul Hadith Moulana Muhammed Raza Saheb Ajmeri* ﷺ, *Hadhrat Mufti Saeed Ahmed Saheb*

Palanpuri دامت برکاتہم (the present Sheihkul *Hadith* of *Darul Uloom Deoband*), *Hadhrat Moulana Ahmed Ashraf Saheb Randeri* ﷺ and *Hadhrat Moulana Hakeem Abus-Shifaa Saheb* ﷺ, amongst a host of others.

After graduating from *Madrasah Ashrafiyyah* as an *Aalim* of note, *Hadhrat Mufti Ahmed Saheb Khanpuri* دامت برکاتہم proceeded to the cradle of all *Darul Ulooms*; viz. *Darul Uloom Deoband*, to further his studies. During his first year there, he enrolled for the course of *Funoon* which is a complicated and complex course that only brilliant-minded students can enrol in.

During this year he studied specialized subjects and *Kitaabs* in the field of *Mantiq* (Logic), *Ilmul Hay'at* (Astronomy), *Falsafa* (Philosophy), *Aqaa'id* (Beliefs and Tenets of Faith), *Usoolul-Fiqh* (Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence), etc.

Here too, he excelled and passed with distinction by coming out first in his class. The following year he did *Ifta* (the *Mufti* Course) under the expert tutelage and guidance of *Faqihul-Ummah Hadhrat Mufti Mahmood Hasan Saheb Gangohi* and *Hadhrat Mufti Nizamuddeen Saheb A'zmi* ﷺ.

During his year in the *Ifta* course, he was blessed with the good fortune of staying in the *khidmah* (service) of his *Ustaadh*, *Hadhrat Mufti Mahmood Hasan Saheb Gangohi* ﷺ whereby he used to attend to his daily errands, serve his meals, see to the cleanliness of his room and also attend to his guests.

After he had completed his two-year stay at *Deoband*, the famous and historical *Darul Uloom* at *Dabhel* in the *Gujarat* Province enlisted his services and, at the young age of only 22, he was appointed as a lecturer at the said *Darul Uloom*. What actually transpired is that his *Ustaadh*, *Faqihul-Ummah Hadhrat Mufti Mahmood Hasan Saheb Gangohi* ﷺ received letters from three famous *Darul Ulooms* that *Hadhrat* should recommend a capable *Aalim* for the post of a lecturer at these institutes.

These *Darul Uloom*s were situated at *Gangoh*, *Kanpur* and *Dabhel*. *Hadhrat* asked his student to choose from the three, so he opted for *Dabhel*.

Hadhrat Faqihul-Ummah then wrote a letter of recommendation to the *Mohtamim* (Principal) of the *Dabhel Darul Uloom* and that letter sums up the personality of *Hadhrat Mufti Ahmed Saheb Khanpuri* دامت برکاتہم.

Hereunder follows what *Hadhrat* wrote in that letter:

"I have a suitable candidate for the post of a lecturer at your Madrasah. His name is Molvi Ahmed, who is a resident of Khanpur in the Bharuch region of Gujarat. At present, he is residing here (in Deoband) with me. He is busy training to be a Mufti. He is a pious young man, intelligent and Allah-fearing.

He possesses excellent academic capabilities and also engages constantly in the Zikr of Allah. I pray that Allah Ta'aala grants him the ability to sincerely serve your institute with excellence for the pleasure of Allah."

These words of recommendation from none other than the pen of *Hadhrat Faqihul-Ummah* ﷺ highlights the unique qualities of *Hadhrat Mufti Ahmed Saheb Khanpuri* دامت برکاتہم.

Since the time of his appointment at the *Dabhel Darul Uloom* in the year 1969 up to the present time, *Hadhrat Mufti Ahmed Saheb Khanpuri* دامت برکاتہم has, for a period of 42 years, served the said institute. He was very quickly promoted to the post of *Naazim-e-Taa'leemaat* (Head of Educational Affairs) and also taught various subjects such as *Tafseer*, *Hadith* and *Fiqh* to the students of the higher classes. At present, he serves as the *Sheikhul Hadith* and teaches the *Sahih Bukhari* to the final year students. He was also appointed as the Chief *Mufti* of the institute, a post he has held for the last 23 years and teaches and trains students who are doing the *Mufti* course.

He is an ocean of knowledge and is very famous for his *wasee mutala'aa* (broad research). A few months before *Mufti A'zam* (head *Mufti*) of *Gujarat*, *Mufti Abdur Raheem Saheb Lajpuri* ﷺ passed away, he said to *Mufti Ahmed Saheb* دامت برکاتہم : "Now you are the *Mufti A'zam* of *Gujarat*." *Hadhrat Mufti Ahmed Saheb* humbly replied: "I am still a baby compared to you."

A glimpse of the high level of his *Taqwa* can be gauged from the following incident:

Someone from overseas sent him an expensive pair of shoes as a gift. Neither was the sender or recipient of the gift aware that the shoes were made of pigskin leather. When *Hadhrat Mufti Ahmed Saheb Khanpuri* دامت برکاتہم was on a visit to Delhi, he stayed at the home of *Hajee Mansoor Saheb*, who used to be the host of *Faqihul-Ummah Hadhrat Mufti Mahmood Hasan Saheb Gangohi* رحمہ اللہ. *Hajee Mansoor Saheb*, being a widely travelled man and acquainted with the leather-tanning industry immediately pointed out that the shoes were made of pigskin.

As soon as he was informed of this, *Hadhrat Mufti Ahmed Saheb Khanpuri* دامت برکاتہم immediately removed the shoes and got rid of them. He could not bear to keep them on for even a moment longer!

Nowadays, a great deal of *Hadhrat Mufti Ahmed Saheb Khanpuri* دامت برکاتہم's time is dedicated towards *islah* and *tazkiyyah* (purification of the soul and heart) and travelling throughout the world for this purpose. He stresses much more on rectifying the *nafs* (base self) and consistency in doing good deeds. Sitting in his company illuminates the heart and creates in one the urge to do righteous deeds.

He has excelled in the path of *sulook* and *tasawwuf* and is one of the senior most *Khulafaa* (disciples) of *Faqeehul-Ummah, Hadhrat Mufti Mahmood Hasan Saheb Gangohi* رحمہ اللہ. *Hadhrat Faqeehul-Ummah* once addressed him as "*Majma-ul Kamaalaat wal Hasaanaat*" (collection of great accomplishments) only ever addressing one other of his *Khulafaa*, namely *Mufti Abul Qasim Banaarasi* دامت برکاتہم (who is currently the *Mohtamim*/Rector of *Darul Uloom Deoband*) with that title.

May Allah Ta'aala keep his shadow over us for long and grant us the fortitude to derive benefit and spiritual effulgence from his enlightening discourses.

Aameen

A

الحمد لله نحمده ونستعينه ونستغفره ونؤمن به ونتوكل عليه ونعوذ بالله من شرور انفسنا ومن سيئات اعمالنا

من يهده الله فلا مضل له ومن يضلله فلا هادي له

ونشهد ان لا اله الا الله وحده لا شريك له ونشهد ان سيدنا ومولانا محمدا عبده ورسوله ،

صلى الله تعالى عليه وعلى اله واصحابه وبارك وسلم تسليما كثيرا كثيرا

اما بعد فاعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

﴿شهر رمضان الذي انزل فيه القرآن هدى للناس وبينت من الهدى والفرقان. فمن شهد منكم الشهر فليصمه﴾

وقال تعالى: ﴿يا ايها الذين امنوا كتب عليكم الصيام كما كتب على الذين من قبلكم لعلكم تتقون﴾

Respected audience! At this point in time the blessed month of *Ramadhaan* has drawn very near and today some words will be shared in connection with this.

AS IS THE OCCASION, SO WILL BE THE PREPARATION

The month of *Ramadhaan* is a great bounty of Allah ﷻ. The regard shown towards something will be in proportion to its importance and preciousness.

If for example a person is hosting some occasion, then proportionate to the occasion will be the preparation.

Preparations are made two or four days in advance for certain occasions, eight days prior preparations are made for certain other occasions, weeks before for another and even months before for certain others.

Assume for instance some great personality like the Prime Minister has scheduled a trip to *Surat* and is expected to arrive. The city will consequently undergo extensive renovation, beautification and ornamentation along with much other preparation in reception of the Prime Minister who is on tour.

Thus, preparation will be made for an individual's reception proportionate to how prominent and worthy of reverence he is.

THE REGARD FOR RAMADHAAN IN THE SIGHT OF ALLAH TA'AALA

Great importance is displayed from the side of Allah ﷻ for the blessed month of *Ramadhaan*. Nabi Kareem ﷺ has also elucidated its worth in various ways to the *ummah*.

Its importance in the sight of Allah ﷻ is understood from the following *Hadith* of Nabi Kareem ﷺ:

“*Jannah* is beautified and adorned from one *Ramadhaan* to the next in anticipation of the blessed month of *Ramadhaan*.”

i.e. from the completion of one *Ramadhaan* up to the commencement of the next *Ramadhaan*, for a full eleven months, *Jannah* is beautified for the coming *Ramadhaan*.

As is already evident, which bounty and adornment of Allah Ta’aala is not found in *Jannah*?

ولكم فيها ما تشتهي انفسكم ولكم فيها ما تدعون

Translation: “*And therein will be for you whatever your heart desires and all that you ask for.*”

And such things are found therein which a *Hadith* describes as:

ما لا عين رأت ولا اذن سمعت ولا خطر على قلب بشر

Translation: “*That which no eye has seen, nor has any ear heard of, nor has it crossed the imagination of any person.*”

Despite *Jannah* being beautified and adorned from before, Allah ﷻ further enhances its beauty and adornment. We are able to gauge from this the regard for the blessed month of *Ramadhaan* in the sight of Allah ﷻ.

Apart from this the doors of *Jannah* are opened and the *shayaateen* (devils) are chained.

In short, all this regard is displayed from the side of Allah Ta’aala. We understand from this that Allah ﷻ desires the following in this month:-

“My servants detach themselves from all things and turn their attention to Me.”

It is for this very reason that all such things are divinely removed which pose as obstacles in achieving this end.

HUNGER AND NIGHT VIGIL FORM THE TECHNIQUE OF TRAINING

Shaytaan poses as a threat. Thus, it is mentioned in a *Hadith* that the *shayaateen* are imprisoned and their legs are chained.

Ones carnal self poses as a threat. Thus, Allah ﷻ has prescribed fasting.

In fasting one remains hungry and thirsty, and owing to *taraweeh salaah* at night one is required to remain awake. By fasting ones beastly instincts are restrained and effort is made to bring it under control and in addition to this, devilish instincts are also controlled.

It is mentioned in a *Hadith*:

ان الشيطان يجرى من الانسان مجرى الدم ، الا فسدوا مجاريه بالجوع

Translation: “*Shaytaan moves and flows within a person just as blood moves and flows within him. Therefore, be careful (of this onslaught of Shaytaan)! and block off all his passages (whereby he may influence you) by remaining hungry.*”

Just as blood flows throughout ones body, so too does *shaytaan* penetrate and negatively influence a person. Hudhoor ﷻ has exhorted us that we should block all his pathways and channels of movement by remaining hungry.

Thus, an attempt is made to remove devilish influences and simultaneously beastly influences are also expelled by virtue of which one is required to remain hungry and thirsty as is the case in training a hunting animal to hunt.

You have observed in the circus that wild animals are made to perform tricks and are trained for the same purpose. Two strategies are employed in training them, firstly, they are starved, and secondly, they are deprived of sleep.

Thus, as a result of lack of sleep and food they become tame.

If they are fed and allowed to rest then they would never become submissive.

Similarly, all such obstacles which hinder a bondsman's proximity, relationship and attachment with Allah ﷻ are eliminated. As if Allah Ta'aala desires in these days and in this month that His bondsman is united with Him and that a special relationship and bond is established with Allah ﷻ.

THE REGARD FOR RAMADHAAN IN THE SIGHT OF HUDHOOR ﷻ

Hudhoor Akram ﷻ has also communicated the importance of this month to the *ummah* in various manners.

A person is taught a supplication upon the sighting of the moon of each month:

هلال خير ورشد

Translation: "This moon brings goodness and guidance along with it."

And this *duaa* should also be made:

اللهم اهله علينا بالامن والايمان والسلامة والاسلام

Translation: "Oh Allah! This month's moon should appear unto us in a state of peace, imaan, safety and Islam"

i.e. the coming month should bring with it all goodness and favours.
This *duaa* should be recited upon the sighting of the moon of each month.

Nabi Kareem ﷺ has taught us the supplication for each occasion. This is also an extreme level of compassion upon the *ummah* of Nabi Kareem ﷺ. For one is unaware of what the future holds, therefore, Nabi Kareem ﷺ has taught us this *duaa* in order to accord due regard to it so that through its blessings Allah Ta'aala will ease any adverse conditions.

It is owing to our misfortune that we do not show due importance for such matters.

THE COMPASSION OF NABI KAREEM ﷺ UPON THE UMMAH THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF DUAAS

A *duaa* is taught for when one wears a new item of clothing for one is unaware of what good or evil this new clothing will bring with it.

Hudhoor ﷺ taught the following *duaa*:

اللهم اني اسئلك خيرها وخير ما صنع لها

Translation: "Oh Allah! I ask of You the good found within it and of all its uses I ask of You the best thereof and I seek Your protection from the evil found within it and from of all its uses I seek Your protection from the evil ones thereof."

A person could display pride and arrogance by wearing an item of clothing and he could despise another person or by wearing it he might desire that a female sees him and admires his handsomeness.

Such intentions are accursed in *Hadith*. Thus protection is sought from all such evils and goodness is anticipated.

Accordingly a *duaa* is taught for when a person acquires a conveyance.

"Grant me that good for which it has been created."

Similarly, a person who acquires a new vehicle should supplicate in the same words. We acquire new vehicles but do not give due importance to these supplications as a result of which we fall prey to misfortunes and calamities.

In short, it is an extreme level of compassion of Nabi Kareem ﷺ to teach us the supplications for all conditions.

Moreover, when a person moves from one period of time to another, for example night passes and he now enters day, or day passes and he now enters night, for these occasions a *duaa* has also been taught.

Similarly, for example, when a person moves from one place to another, *duaas* have been taught for when one enters and leaves the home, enters and leaves the masjid, enters and leaves the toilet, goes to the marketplace, for situations facing one in the marketplace and toilet, for protection from all

possible mishaps in the toilet, for the acquisition of all goodness possible in the masjid, and upon leaving the masjid for safeguard from all possible misfortunes and for the acquisition of all possible good.

Both aspects are encompassed herein.

The point being made is that Nabi Kareem ﷺ has taught us the *dua*a for each and every occasion. It is as if Nabi Kareem ﷺ has taught us in advance the supplication for every good and the safeguard for every evil in each situation which presents itself.

Along with this a bondsman's contact and bond with Allah Ta'aala is established. When one will supplicate in every condition, then he will reflect that he is present before Allah Ta'aala and will consequently become aware of Allah Ta'aala at every moment for in no condition is Allah Ta'aala unaware of him. It should not be such that only in *salaah* is his attention towards Allah Ta'aala, but apart from *salaah* as well.

Nabi Kareem ﷺ has taught us these *dua*as so that a servant's link and connection with Allah ﷻ is established on a permanent and continual basis.

SUPPLICATIONS FORM THE GIST OF THE CORPUS OF *HADITH*

Allamah Anwar Shah Kashmiri ﷺ has mentioned:

"These supplications form the essence and gist of the corpus of *Hadith*.

All the teachings of Nabi Kareem ﷺ are encompassed therein."

RESTLESSNESS IN THE QUEST OF ACQUISITION

Nonetheless, upon sighting the new moon of the month of *Rajab*, we have been taught to read the following *dua*a in addition to the *dua*a taught by Hudhoor Akram ﷺ upon sighting the new moon of every other month:

اللهم بارك لنا في رجب وشعبان بلغنا رمضان

Translation: "Oh Allah! You bless us (i.e. in our lives) in the months of *Rajab* and *Sha'baan* and make us witness *Ramadhaan*."

It is as if by means of this *duaa* the restlessness and yearning of something is being created in the heart despite *Ramadhān* being two months away.

Now just two months remain for the arrival of such a blessed month.

"Oh Allah! Since just two months remain may it not be such that I depart from this world prior to acquiring the blessings of this blessed month."

Ponder for a moment! Extended life is being asked for, just as an aged woman does by supplicating thus:

"Oh, Allah! Take me from this world after my son's wedding."

She thereafter makes *duaa*:

"Let me leave this world after he has a child."

Thus, after she is granted a grandchild she supplicates:

"Oh, Allah! Allow me the opportunity to witness my grandchild's wedding before leaving this world."

She continues to make *duaa* in this manner. And once her grandchild is wedded she makes this *duaa*:

"Let me see them happy and prosperous before I depart."

It is as if in this manner of supplication she extends the period of validity of her visa, as if she yearns to behold with her own eyes an anticipated bounty in the home.

At such occasions one exhibits a yearning when the time has drawn near lest one should depart without witnessing it.

As in the case when a journey is scheduled and a wedding is also to take place in a person's home or relatives home then one supplicates thus:

"Oh, Allah! Make such an arrangement that I am present for the wedding and thereafter my journey takes place."

A person will endeavour to make such an arrangement.

In the same way seeing that now just two months remain for *Ramadhān*, Nabi Kareem ﷺ had taught us this *duaa* lest it should happen such that we leave this world before *Ramadhān*.

Therefore make *duaa* thus:

“Grant me life so that I witness *Ramadhān* and acquire its blessings.”

We learn from this that it is allowed and permitted to ask for extended life for the carrying out of some good deed in order to acquire the pleasure of Allah.

Here as well we have been taught to ask for an opportunity to witness *Ramadhān*.

TWO MONTHS PRIOR MENTAL PREPARATION

Ultimately, what is the purpose of teaching this *duaa*?

The very purpose of this *duaa* is that you are mentally prepared two months prior, just as informing is done for the mental preparation of such people who are unaware of something that such and such a thing is to take place or so and so is arriving.

By repetition one will become mentally prepared.

Those associates of ours who have travelled to the area of Kerala in *jamaat* have informed us of a custom found in the people there that from the beginning of *Rajab* up to the commencement of *Ramadhān* this *duaa*:

اللهم بارك لنا في رجب وشعبان بلغنا رمضان

is daily read audibly after every *salaah*. (This information pleased us when we heard of it!) It is read daily so that its importance settles in the heart. It is as if we are being mentally prepared.

Nabi Kareem ﷺ points out to us that this is no insignificant month and since only two months remain for its arrival, we should therefore make this *duaa* unto Allah Ta'aala lest one departs from this world, resulting in deprivation.

A MAGNIFICENT AND GREAT MONTH

Nabi Kareem ﷺ had before the commencement of *Ramadhān* specially delivered a discourse in which attention is drawn to this month:

قد اظلكم شهر عظيم ، شهر مبارك ، شهر فيه ليلة خير من الف شهر

Translation: “A great month has dawned upon you, a most blessed month, a month wherein lies a night more virtuous than a thousand months.”

Furthermore, this is such a month:

اوله رحمة ، واوسطه مغفرة وآخره عتق من النار

Translation: "The beginning portion of which is mercy, the middle ten days are days of forgiveness and the last ten days are the days of emancipation from jahannam."

Only if the mercy of Allah is present will one fast, perform acts of devotion and perform *taraweeh salaah*. When for a period of ten days some acts of worship have been carried out then it is as though one has become deserving of the forgiveness of Allah Ta'aala. It is thus stated that the middle ten days are days of forgiveness.

And once a person has been forgiven, he has consequently been granted deliverance from jahannam. It is thus mentioned that the last ten days are the days of emancipation from hell-fire.

THE DEVOTIONAL PRACTICES OF RAMADHAAN

Attention has also been drawn to the devotional practices of this month that Allah Ta'aala has declared the fasting as *fardh* and the *taraweeh salaah* as *sunnah*.

And further one should duly endeavour to feed a fasting person and also to recite an abundance of *kalimah tayyibah* and *istighfaar* and to beg for *Jannah* and seek protection from *jahannam*.

ACCORD DUE REGARD FOR THE ACQUISITION OF THIS MONTH

Nonetheless, before *Ramadhaan*, Nabi Kareem ﷺ used to draw attention to the above-mentioned aspects in his sermon.

What is the objective of all of this? It is to emphasize the importance of this month and to impress the value thereof upon the hearts and minds of the *ummah* so that by appreciating and understanding its importance, due regard is given for the acquisition of this month.

It is for this reason that Allah Ta'aala has specially kept this month so that a bondsman may strengthen his connection and bond with Allah Ta'aala.

In doing so the residue and veil upon his heart, resulting from his occupation in his worldly involvements of trade, manufacturing, farming, employment, etc, for the entire year, can be removed.

Factory owners know that a service is required on machinery after they have been in use for a period of time and they are overhauled. Due to the machines being opened and serviced the factory remains closed for two days and work is suspended. If they are not serviced then they will not function at optimal levels and the desired output will not be realised.

Accordingly is the anticipated effect of the month of *Ramadhān*.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE WORSHIP OF HUMAN BEINGS AND ANGELS

As such Allah Ta'aala has directly created humans for His worship. Allah Ta'aala mentions:

وما خلقت الجن والانس الا ليعبدون

Translation: "And we have not created the *jinn* and human kind except for My worship."

Although angels also carry out acts of worship, their worship is, however, of a different nature and the worship of humans is different. The natural disposition and temperament of angels is one of obedience and submission. There is absolutely no disposition of vice and disobedience in their makeup. It is as though they were created for worship and thus remain engaged therein.

Angels perform acts of devotion in various manners. It is recorded in the *ahaadeeth* that some angels are such who always remain in *ruku'*. From the time Allah Ta'aala had created them till the day of judgement they will remain in the posture of *ruku'*. Others will remain in the posture of *sajdah*.

There are many other such angels to whom Allah Ta'aala had assigned some duty which they exclusively fulfil and that is their worship.

Nonetheless, their very disposition is one of obedience and submission. There is no disobedience and vice in their makeup at all. Even if they wish to, they cannot.

Allah Ta'aala has not kept any disobedience in their nature and disposition. This describes their temperament, nature and disposition.

On the contrary, Allah Ta'aala created man such that He has placed both aspects within him; obedience and disobedience. The options of both obedience and non-compliance have been inherently designated within humankind.

REMUNERATION UPON CORRECT DECISIONS AND CHASTISEMENT

Thus, upon exercising this option to remain in the obedience and submission of Allah Ta'aala i.e. by doing those actions which Allah Ta'aala has instructed and by refraining from the prohibited actions, one attains close proximity to Allah Ta'aala . Allah Ta'aala thereupon becomes pleased and as a result sends one to *Jannah*.

And if one does not fulfil his duties and does not refrain from the prohibitions, then Allah Ta'aala becomes displeased and dispatches one to jahannam. Thus an individual holds a choice.

Although Allah Ta'aala alone is the Sole-Doer, Allah Ta'aala facilitates the means based on the choice exercised by a person. Subsequently, based on this very choice will one, receive a reward from Allah ﷻ if exercised in an appropriate manner and chastisement if utilised in an evil manner.

JANNAH IS HIS ABODE

Despite the fact that there are obstacles emanating, firstly, from his very temperament in the path of establishing a bond with Allah Ta'aala and along with this there are the urges and desires of one's carnal self, he then too suppresses his desires and safeguards himself from the disobedience of Allah Ta'aala.

He is also constantly deterred by the desire of disobedience which overflows and endeavours to hinder his obedience of and submission unto Allah Ta'aala.

He, however, reflects thus that he has to answer to Allah Ta'aala tomorrow:

واما من خاف مقام ربه ونهى النفس عن الهوى فان الجنة هي المأوى

Translation: "And as for the one who fears that he is to stand before his Sustainer (and as a result of this fear) he restrains his carnal self from giving vent to his desires, Jannah will be his abode."

Insha-Allah, for such a person Jannah will be his ultimate abode.

THE VALUE OF BEING COGNIZANT OF ACCOUNTABILITY

It is as though this awareness and picture is before him that he has to stand before Allah ﷻ and answer for all his actions done in this world for which he will have to be accountable for. This thought worries him that how will he be able to answer to Allah ﷻ. He constantly reflects thus and safeguards himself from sin and disobedience.

It is also as if the desire of disobedience plagues him, the urge of desires shadows him, the inclination of sin abounds within him and evil-inciting desires actively run havoc within him. Despite all of this, he safeguards himself and engages in the obedience and submission of Allah ﷻ. Thus this carries great value in the sight of Allah ﷻ and Jannah has been promised for such an individual. The angels have not been instructed with this whilst mankind has been subjected to this.

WHY WILL HUMANS ALONE ENJOY THE FAVOURS OF JANNAH?

And humans alone will enjoy every bounty of Jannah, not angels, because man engaged in worship despite the hindrances in his path. Thus, its appreciation and value in the sight of Allah ﷻ is immense.

Take for example the scene of a seeing man who is tempted to gaze at a strange woman. There is no obstruction and his carnal self is imploring him but despite this he restrains himself by reflecting thus:

"How will I answer Allah Ta'aala if I look at this strange woman for Allah Ta'aala has commanded:

قل للمؤمنين يغضوا من ابصارهم

Translation: "Say, oh Muhammad ﷺ! Unto the believers that they should lower their gazes,"

I must therefore comply."

Nabi Kareem ﷺ has also advised the following:

لعن الله الناظر والمنظور اليه

Translation: "The curse of Allah is upon the one who looks and the one who is looked at."

من نظر الى محاسن امرأة ، صب الله في عينيه الآنك يوم القيامة

Translation: "On the day of judgement molten lead will be poured into the eyes of the one who looks at the beauty and adornments of a strange woman."

By reflecting thereupon he restrains himself and truly fulfils the command of Allah Ta'aala and endeavours to safeguard himself from the disobedience of Allah Ta'aala, places himself in difficulty, tolerates the sacrifice and bears the inconvenience in fulfilling the command of Allah. He has now saved himself from sin.

This heralds immense appreciation in the sight of Allah Ta'aala.

THIS IS AN ACHIEVEMENT

Assume a blind man says:

"I have never cast a glance on a strange woman and have not watched television up to today."

The response unto him will be thus:

"Brother, you do not possess sight. Even if you wish to see, you cannot. What achievement is there if you did not look since you are unable to do so?"

If he retaliates by saying:

"I safeguarded myself from this sin."

He will then be advised in the following words:

"It is only regarded as an achievement if you safeguard yourself from such a sin which you possess the ability and potential to commit."

These sentiments are reflected in the following statement of *Hadhrat Moulana Shah Hakeem Muhammad Akhtar Saheb* رحمۃ اللہ علیہ:

“What will *Hadhrat Jibraeel* عليه السلام know if a woman was placed in his lap for he is pure from desires. He who possesses desires will know.”

Thus, the bounties of *Jannah* are based on this.

FASTING CONSTITUTES AN ACT OF DEVOTION FOR US

Brother! Our remaining hungry and thirsty constitutes fasting. Fasting is an act of worship for us and not for the angels because we experience hunger. The craving for food is part of our nature. We feel thirsty and the craving for water is within our nature. We are inclined to our wives and the urge to fulfil our desire is also part of our nature. What do angels experience?

Thus, what achievement is there if angels remain hungry and if they do not eat a single grain of food or drink a drop of water or abstain from woman? Since they do not possess the urges for such things at all, what is the purpose of their fasting? There is no fasting for them and neither does it constitute an act of worship. Fasting constitutes an act of worship for us.

VALUE HAS COME INTO OUR WORSHIP

The gist of this discussion is that a person has suppressed these demands that Allah Ta’aala has placed within him and he has protected himself from sin. In a similar manner, he has fulfilled the commands of Allah Ta’aala and engaged in worship despite these obstacles being present. Thus, value has embraced his worship and therefore he has been granted *Jannah*.

Therefore, mankind alone will enjoy the bounties of *Jannah* and ones lusts will be satisfied with the wide-eyed damsels of *Jannah*. He will also be exposed to a world of rare and wonderful music which he will be made to hear. In this world listening to music is restricted and forbidden but in *Jannah* Allah Ta’aala will make him listen to those lyrics.

So all of this is found in *Jannah* and man alone will be able to enjoy them because these urges are found in man and not in the angels. Angels will not be able to enjoy its bounties even if they are in *Jannah* because only that human is able to enjoy its every bounty who possesses the capacity to do so.

PLEASURE IS PROPORTIONATE TO CAPACITY

I usually cite this example that picture us seated at a *dastarkhaan* (table) eating and drinking with plates, bowls and soup-bearing vessels also placed down before us.

Does the bowl filled with soup perceive the taste of the soup? Despite the bowl containing the soup, it cannot perceive any taste of the soup, whether it is sweet or otherwise for it does not possess the capacity to perceive taste. He alone is able to enjoy the taste of something who possesses the ability to do so.

What does an immature child understand of the pleasures of a woman? If he is seated in a place where all are discussing women what will he understand because he does not have the ability to perceive this!

If, for example, you share some intellect-requiring witty remark or joke with such a gathering wherein there are donkeys or dull minded people seated, then all the other people will laugh upon hearing the joke but they will not experience any humour because they do not possess the ability to perceive this pleasure.

In short, all these are bounties but capacity is required to enjoy and perceive each bounty. Thus, one will derive pleasure proportionate to the ability he possesses. So Allah Ta'aala has placed all these aspects in man because he is to receive *Jannah* and derive pleasure from its bounties and only with all of this will he be able to enjoy its bounties. How will he derive enjoyment if he is void of these urges? How will the food of *Jannah* be palatable to one who has no urge for hunger? He who has never felt hungry will not perceive the enjoyment of food. The angels in *Jannah* will not derive any enjoyment despite being there, but man will.

Nonetheless! Allah Ta'aala has created man for a special form of worship. By placing both types of urges within him he is entrusted with the commission and omission of certain actions, whereas it is not such that he is not able to commit the prohibitions rather he has the full ability to do so.

Now, this is left to be seen whether he safeguards himself from the prohibitions in order to please Allah Ta'aala or not, and whether in order to please Allah Ta'aala he fulfills the instructions of Allah Ta'aala or not.

Similarly, does he, due to the fear of Allah Ta'aala, discharge his obligations or not.

GAVE HIM A FINGER AND HE TOOK THE ARM

Ultimately, Allah ﷻ has created man for His worship. The demand of this is that he should remain engaged in worship twenty fours of the day. At most, permission ought to be granted only for answering the call of nature and for eating food when hungry, but there should be no permission granted for one to open a shop or manage a factory or engage in farming, etc.

However, such is the favour of Allah Ta'aala that despite having created us exclusively for His worship, some time is stipulated for worship and the remainder of the time we are permitted to fulfil our personal needs and that of our family, to engage in trade, agriculture, manufacturing, retail etc. whereas Allah Ta'aala has purchased our lives and wealth:

ان الله اشترى من المؤمنين أنفسهم وأموالهم بأن لهم الجنة

Translation: "Most certainly, Allah has purchased from the believers their personal selves and their wealth in exchange of Jannah."

Allah Ta'aala has paid the price for our lives and wealth. Our lives and wealth have become the property of Allah Ta'aala.

It is the favour of Allah Ta'aala that despite this fact He has permitted us to use it for our personal matters.

Notwithstanding that five times daily *salaah* is *fardh* which we have to perform and discharge the fasts in *Ramadh*aan.

We are further instructed to do certain things and to refrain from others.

Since the habit of man is that if you give him your finger then he will grab your arm where concession is given to him, thus, the result of this concession is that he has become so engrossed in his work that this preoccupation has led him from one factory to two and so on.

His daily chores of 'do this', 'do that', 'purchase that also', 'want that also' has led him to become so preoccupied in his work that he has begun to consider that he has been created for this purpose and worship is naturally forgotten.

Accordingly, when such a person is given the *taufeeq* to perform *salaah* hears the athaan, he looks at his watch saying:

"There still remains fifteen or twenty minutes. What will I do if I go so early to the masjid?"

This is our temperament. He will further consider:

"What will I do so early in the masjid? i.e. our work is that which we are involved in and other works are not for us to do. There is still fifteen minutes for *jamaat* to stand up. All there is to do is just sit and wait till then. Nothing else."

And when the time for *salaah* has come then he starts preparing for *salaah* and hastily runs insensibly. Wudhu is performed hastily and when he spots the imam in *ruku'* he athletically hurls himself into *ruku'* and joins the *salaah*. And after *salaam* is made for this haphazard *salaah* of his with or without performing the *sunnah* and *witr*, he flees.

This is the condition of five times *salaah* which is *fardh* and this is the condition of those who perform *salaah*.

Some are such who do not perform *salaah* in congregation at all, but perform their *salaah* in their homes or a room in their factories or in their shop. Others are those who do not find any time during the day and perform three *salaahs* at home in the evening.

If they are asked as to why they do this they reply that they do not get an opportunity in the workplace.

This is the state of those who read salaah and what is there to even say of those who do not perform *salaah*.

ABUSE OF CONCESSION

Allah Ta'aala has created us for worship whereas we have abused the rights of this worship in the light of the above concessions.

Our condition has become such that as a result of continuous involvement in other things, our hearts have become so attached that the love for things has entered our hearts, rust has settled upon our hearts and our connection and bond with Allah Ta'aala has faded.

Furthermore, consider the following; you have heard repeatedly that when a person makes an effort on something then a bond of love is created for it. Similarly, if a man makes effort and strives in worship then he will acquire the closeness of Allah Ta'aala and a bond with Allah Ta'aala will be created.

And if he becomes involved in trade, then despite him remaining within the ambit of *shariah* and despite him adopting permissible strategies and giving full regard to the *masaail* in trade; then too that trade will distance him from Allah Ta'aala because this is involvement in something other than Allah Ta'aala which has no direct link with the worship of Allah Ta'aala.

AN INSTRUCTION OF SECLUSION SUBSEQUENT TO INVOLVEMENT

Look! The occupation of Nabi Kareem ﷺ was to give people the invitation of imaan. However, for giving the invitation of imaan it required association with the creation, to meet with people and reside amongst them and converse with them. All this was inevitable.

However, Allah Ta'aala mentions:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَزْمَلُ قُمْ اللَّيْلَ الْاَقْلِيلًا نِصْفَهُ أَوْ انْقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا

Translation: "Oh the one enshrouded in a blanket! Rise in the night (in worship of your Sustainer) except for a short period. Either for half the night or decrease that slightly."

فَاذْفَرِغْتَ فَأَنْصِبْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَأَرْغَبْ

Translation: "So when you completed your task, devote yourself for Allah's worship. And to your Sustainer (alone) turn (all your) intentions and hopes."

The occupation of Hudhoor ﷺ was not trade, agriculture and retail; neither was Hudhoor ﷺ a trader nor a factory owner. Instead, Hudhoor ﷺ used to be preoccupied in delivering the invitation of imaan to the people the entire day.

Despite this, Allah Ta'aala exhorts Nabi ﷺ that once he has completed his *da'wah*, then he should stand before his Rabb and tire himself in performing salaah, sajdah and engage in the remembrance of Allah Ta'aala and that he should turn his attention towards his Rabb whereas the occupation of Hudhoor ﷺ was purely religious.

Allah Ta'aala had instructed Nabi ﷺ with engagement in worship despite this purely religious involvement.

THE PRACTICE OF HADHRAT MOULANA ILYAAS SAHEB ﷺ

Our *Hadhrat Mufti Mahmood Saheb* ﷺ used to often relate this statement of *Hadhrat Moulana Ilyas Saheb* ﷺ :

"Whenever I am obliged to attend an *ijtima'*, then upon return from the *ijtima'* I present myself in the company of *Hadhrat Raipuri* ﷺ in *Raipur*. And if I am unable to do so, then I remain in *i'tikaaf* for three days in my masjid so that the dust upon my heart resulting from associating with people may be removed."

It is evident that *Hadhrat* did not attend the *ijtima'* with the purpose of opening a shop. Rather, it was purely out of his passion for the effort of *Deen*. He would deliver religious talks to the audience but despite this *Hadhrat* would accord individual importance for engaging in the remembrance of Allah Ta'aala.

MY HEART ALSO BECOMES CLOUDED

It is recorded in a *Hadith* that Hudhoor Akram ﷺ has mentioned:

انى لاستغفرالله فى اليوم سبعين مرة ليغان على قلبى

Translation: "I seek forgiveness of Allah Ta'aala seventy times in a day and my heart also becomes clouded."

Ulema have written in the commentary of this *Hadith* that as a result of mixing with people, the difference perceived in the bond with Allah ﷻ has been described in the words ليغان على قلبى .

Despite the fact that Hudhoor ﷺ's mixing with people was for the sake of Allah Ta'aala and for the effort of Allah Ta'aala's *Deen*, and he was sent for this very purpose, a link was maintained with creation and attention was shifted from Allah Ta'aala towards another.

This could be understood from the example of a wife who is preoccupied in looking after her children. As long she is occupied with the children, she is unable to see to her husband although the children are of both the parents. So, just as the wife would deem it essential to pay attention to her husband despite the fact that seeing to the children is also part of serving her husband.

In exactly the same manner, effort for *Deen* is purely for the sake of Allah Ta'aala but despite this, it is essential to dedicate exclusive worship and attention to Allah Ta'aala.

FREE ONE MONTH EXCLUSIVELY FOR ME

The gist of all of this is that all these occupations are permitted within the ambit of *shariah*, but it results in leaving an effect on the heart. The heart becomes stained, veiled and soiled.

It is as if Allah Ta'aala is advising us that we should free ourselves for His worship for a month so that we may service and cleanse our hearts.

THE RUST OF THE HEART IS NOT COMPREHENDED

A daily discourse was kept in the *khanqah* of *Hadhrat Sheikh* رحمہ اللہ in *Ramadhaan* at around ten or eleven o' clock. This gathering was generally also addressed by any one of the *Akaabir* as well who visited *Hadhrat Sheikh* رحمہ اللہ. Whilst *Hadhrat Moulana Ubaidullah Saheb* رحمہ اللہ was appointed for delivering lectures in the *Khanqah* of *Hadhrat Sheikh* رحمہ اللہ, *Hadhrat Sheikh* رحمہ اللہ used to co-ordinate the lecture of any senior person when they visited.

Once *Hadhrat Moulana Ali Mia Nadwi* رحمہ اللہ delivered the lecture upon his arrival. *Hadhrat* mentioned in his discourse:

"This blessed month of *Ramadhaan* is for charging our batteries. Once a battery is down due to usage, then it is made usable again by recharging it. All such aspects are understood by us in our worldly matters but the crisis is that the pollution of the heart is not comprehended and no concern is displayed for its removal.

Clothes become soiled after usage and are washed and worn time and again throughout the year. Everything shares a similar nature.

Thus, by engaging in worldly activities the pollution of the world settles upon our heart and it becomes veiled and rusty.

Allah ﷻ has specially stipulated the month of *Ramadhaan* for the removal of this very rust and pollution.

A person should free himself in this month for the worship of Allah ﷻ.

SCHEDULING ONES COMMITMENTS

Hadhrat Sheikh رحمہ اللہ has written in the virtues of *Ramadhaan*:

"Free yourself for one month for the sake of Allah Ta'aala. Free yourself exclusively for the worship of Allah and as far as possible concern yourself with involvement in worship.

Therefore, one is warranted to schedule ones commitments timeously. If a certain task is of such a nature that it could be delayed and postponed for a

month, then this should be done. Other engagements should be done on a minimal level whilst as much time as possible should be dedicated to worship and freeing oneself for the worship of Allah Ta'aala.

Allah Ta'aala mentions:

شهر رمضان الذي انزل فيه القرآن هدى للناس وبينت من الهدى والفرقان.

Translation: "The month of *Ramadh* in which the *Qur'aan* was revealed, a guidance for mankind and clear proofs for the guidance and the criterion (between right and wrong)."

Hence, Allah ﷻ has in this *ayah* mentioned special importance of *Ramadh*.

FASTING IS THE PATHWAY TO TAQWA

A person engages in various forms of worship in order to create a bond with Allah ﷻ.

Some forms of worship are also those which are exclusive to this month and الحمد لله (Alhamdulillah) the believers also accord due importance to them.

Allah Ta'aala mentions:

يا ايها الذين امنوا كتب عليكم الصيام كما كتب على الذين من قبلكم لعلكم تتقون.

Translation: "Oh, believers! Fasting has been made *fardh* upon you just as it has been made *fardh* upon the nations before you so that you may become Allah-conscious."

So fasting is *fardh* and people show importance to it but the rights of fasting should also be fulfilled. Fasting is the pathway to *taqwa*.

Ulema have written that as a result of fasting, a person's beastly instincts are crippled. These beastly instincts are those very forces which result in one pursuing the fulfilment of one's desires. However, as a result of fasting these urges are crippled and he will inevitably refrain from sins and *taqwa* will permeate his heart in this manner.

THE ESSENCE OF FASTING

Hadhrat Thanwi رحمہ اللہ has stated:

"The essence of fasting is to abstain from three things, namely, eating, drinking and intimacy with one's spouse from true dawn up to sunset whereas eating or drinking is not impermissible or *haraam* but rather it has been acquired within the perimeters of *shariah* through *halaal* earnings. Despite this, one has been prohibited to eat in this month and instructed to fast because Allah Ta'aala has issued an instruction by virtue of which a person abstains from a *halaal* thing."

It is recorded in a *Hadith* with regard to fasting that Hudhoor ﷺ mentioned:

"Allah Ta'aala says:

الصوم لى وأنا أجرى به

"Fasting is for Me and I will give its recompense."

Remuneration for other acts of worship has been stipulated. Some are multiplied by seven times, others by seventy times and some by seven hundred times. However, no such stipulation has been fixed for fasting but instead it was expressed thus:

"Fasting is for Me and I will give its recompense."

The reason being that while other acts of worship can be noticed, fasting is such that a fasting person will not be noticed by others, unless the fasting person himself discloses it.

For example, the household members will know if he informs them that he has partaken of *sehri* and will therefore not consume any food during the day. Otherwise, there is no other indication to identify his fasting. The discharge of *zakaah* and *sadaqah* are noticeable but not fasting.

Thus, the essence of fasting is that a person restrains himself from the above-mentioned three things due to the command of Allah Ta'aala and the essence of *taqwa* is also exactly the same in that a person safeguards himself from the disobedience of Allah Ta'aala out of the fear and recognition of Allah Ta'aala.

THE FIRST STEP OF TAQWA

Hadhrat Thanwi رحمته اللہ علیہ has stated:

"This act of fasting is the introductory syllabus and primary course of *taqwa*. The first step of *taqwa* is that a person restrains himself from *halaal* items for the sake of Allah.

Reflect now in the following manner:

"I have restrained myself from that which is *halaal* for the acquisition of the pleasure of Allah Ta'aala. Now, why should I not restrain myself from those things which are at all times, twenty four hours of the day and twelve months of the year, declared as *haraam*."

Consider the following:-

If a fasting person is experiencing severe thirst during the summer months and it so happens that he is locked in his room in which a fridge containing cold water is also found; then too, irrespective of how much a transgressor and evil-doer a person he is, will he drink water in this closed room? He will never drink even a sip of water.

On the contrary, if he drinks the water and later seats himself excitedly with sleeves rolled up at the *dastarkhaan* at the time of *iftaar* and reciting the *duaa*:

اللهم لك صمت وبك آمنت وعليك توكلت وعلى رزقك أفطرت

and then starts eating; who will know if he had eaten or drunk any water prior to that?

However, no one does this due to reflecting thus:

"I am fasting and Allah Ta'aala is watching, how can I break my fast?"

FASTING BECOMES A MEANS OF EMBRACING ISLAM

In previous days there was a person by the name of Qudratullah Shihaab who was a senior I.C.S officer. He had written in his book '*Shihaab Naama*' certain aspects of his life.

He writes at one place that he once travelled to Holland, the land of the Dutch, as an ambassador. He further writes that the Dutch people were extremely rigid with regard to Islam. As such, the whole of Europe share this quality that their bellies start to ache with the name of Islam but the Dutch exceed all in their extremism towards Islam!

Just as upon the birth of a child, a form is completed reflecting the details of the date of birth and child's and parents names; similarly, the religion of the child is also recorded.

The Dutch do not enter any religion upon the birth of a child on the form but leave it blank so that the religion that the child will adopt according to his understanding in the future will be written. They do so because the Europeans consider themselves as promoters of freedom of rights.

Therefore, it will be restrictive if the parents stipulate a religion for their child because this is contrary to freedom of rights according to them. Hence, this block is left blank with a note written that the child will upon attaining maturity choose any religion apart from Islam according to his discretion. This is how extreme they are!

Nonetheless, Shihaab *Saheb* writes:

"I was once sitting in a garden during my stay there when I heard someone reciting *Surah Rahman* in a most excellent manner. Hearing this, I walked towards it and saw a Dutchman seated on a bench reciting the *Qur'aan*.

I approached him and greeted and enquired his name. He replied:

"My name is Abdurrahmaan and I have embraced Islam."

Subsequently, I began conversing with him.

During our conversation, he narrated to me the incident of his acceptance of Islam. He said:

"I was once travelling on a ship and we were loading goods at the dock of *Karachi* during severe heat. The porters and workers were loading the goods and were drenched in sweat due to the extreme heat and were offered water. They did however not drink. I asked them as to the reason why they do not drink the water. They replied that they are fasting and will therefore not drink the water.

I saw an elderly man amongst them who was in a truly pitiable state. I took him into my cabin, locked the door, seated him and presenting him with a glass of juice from the fridge, showed him (for I did not know the language) that the door is locked and no one can see him so he may drink the juice but he refused and turned his face away.

I pleaded with him but he did not accept. He did not even turn his face towards me nor drink a sip of the juice. I pleaded once again to him but it was to no avail. In great amazement, I reflected that there is some other force which prevents him.

This was the incident which lead to my embracing Islam."

The reality is that once the intention to fast has been made, then irrespective of how spiritually weak a muslim might be, he will not even entertain the thought of drinking let alone actually drinking. He reflects thus:

"Even if no person can see me but Allah Ta'aala is watching, so how can I drink?"

This very enthusiasm that Allah Ta'aala is watching, due to which food and drink, which are at other times permitted becomes forbidden, is worship.

THE ESSENCE OF WORSHIP

To do when Allah Ta'aala instructs and to refrain when He prohibits, forms the very essence of worship. To eat when commanded to and not to eat when commanded to abstain, is worship. Hence, treading according to the commands of Allah Ta'aala in all instances is the core of worship.

Therefore, the mere external form of any act of worship may not be classified as worship unless governed by the command of Allah Ta'aala.

Let us reflect upon *salaah* for a moment. Despite its tremendous virtue and significance, one is prohibited from *salaah* at the time of sunrise or when the sun is at its zenith or at sunset. It is as if this point is being illustrated that the meaning of worship and servitude found in *salaah* is due to the command of Allah and *shariah* found within it at any particular time.

Therefore, to perform *salaah* is regarded as an act of worship when *shariah* commands one to do so, and not to perform *salaah* will be rendered as an act of worship when prohibited from doing so.

Bid'ah (Innovation) is termed as *bid'ah*(innovation) for this very reason that it is not in accordance with *shariah*. Despite the fact that many acts of *bid'ah* are in the form of worship but they are not termed as worship because they are not based upon the instruction of *shariah*.

In short, on one hand if you swallow a drop of water one minute prior to sunset then your fast will terminate and you will be guilty of committing a *haraam* act and the *kaffarah* (atonement) of sixty consecutive fasts will become binding. On the other hand, you should not delay in breaking your fast after sunset for even a minute because we are prohibited from delaying in *iftaar* after sunset has occurred.

Similarly, fasting has been made *fardh* with a fixed amount of days wherein there is no scope for any addition or subtraction. In defiance, the previous nations altered the ten days of fasting which was made *fardh* upon them by adding and decreasing therein. Thus, we are prohibited from fasting one or two days before *Ramadhaan* and on the day of *Eid*.

The gist and crux of this discussion is this very point that, do when Allah Ta'aala commands as such and abstain when He prohibits. Eat when He commands. You will be sinful if you do not and stop when He prohibits. You will be guilty if you now eat.

THE REMEDY FOR NOT FEELING THE FAST

In short, when a person has from true dawn up to sunset abstained from those things which are *halaal*, then ponder as to how can those acts which are *haraam* at other times and are twenty four hours declared as *haraam* ever be carried out whilst fasting or can they ever become *halaal*?! for example, looking at a strange woman, casting lustful glances, watching television, backbiting, swearing, arguing and angering someone and all other sins.

However, our state is such that whilst fasting our time does not pass and we therefore engage in sins in order to pass our time by watching television for example. We engage in sins with this in mind that we do not feel our fast. This logic is however incorrect. Instead the fast is felt more by sinning.

Hadhrat Sheikh رحمہ اللہ has written in the Virtues of *Ramadhān*:

“A person will feel the fast due to sinning.”

An incident is recorded of two fasting women who were experiencing severe pangs of hunger due to backbiting.

Hudhoor رحمہ اللہ advised thus:

“They have eaten the flesh of their dead brother so induce them to vomit.”

When this was done pieces of flesh emerged. Through the blessings of *Nabi Kareem* رحمہ اللہ an abstract thing was given a tangible form which they witnessed. These women were in such pangs of hunger that they neared death.

Hadhrat Sheikh رحمہ اللہ has, citing this incident as a proof, written:

“Those who commit sins are more discomforted by fasting, whilst those who engage in acts of worship e.g. performing *salaah*, reciting *Qur’aan*, making *thikr* and abstaining from sins, do not even take notice of the fast.

Even on an extremely hot day they do not feel the fast. Those who commit sins feel it.”

The secret of saving oneself from the effects of the fast is by doing virtuous acts and by abstaining from sins

TAQWA IS PRECISELY THIS!

In short, when a person has abstained from *halaal* things then even more so should one abstain from *haram* things and *taqwa* is precisely this. This state of heart and mind has to be created.

One should ponder that if one has abstained from *halaal* things in order to attain proximity to Allah Ta'aala and to acquire the pleasure of Allah Ta'aala, then even more so should one abstain from *haram* things. If this capacity is created for twenty fours of the day and all twelve months of the year then *taqwa* will be acquired.

The essence and gist of *taqwa* is precisely this that due to fear of Allah Ta'aala one abstains from disobedience.

ABSTAIN FROM SELF-INDULGENCE

Nonetheless, fasting is one practice in *Ramadhan* during which a person should duly safeguard his limbs from sin. The benefit of fasting will become evident when a person abstains from sins. That is why those who indulge in sins whilst fasting do not acquire *taqwa*.

Just as is the case of a one who does not abstain from harmful substances whilst on medication. Of what benefit will medication be to him who takes his medication but is still careless. Medication will only be of complete benefit when a person abstains from what he ought to.

You switch on the air-conditioner which cools a room but you have left the doors and windows open. What reply will people give you if you complain that the room is not becoming cool despite the air-conditioning being switched on?

The reply will be that you should close all the open doors and windows, for if even one door or window is left open, the desired coolness will not be attained.

Similarly, how will *taqwa* be attained if along with the air-conditioning of fasting the doors and windows of vice and disobedience remain open? *Taqwa* will not be acquired.

If you wish to acquire *taqwa* then abstain from self-indulgence and abstain from sins.

Ultimately, you will achieve your objective in the quest of *taqwa* and you will gain proximity to Allah Ta'aala.

May Allah Ta'aala grant us the true appreciation of the blessed month of *Ramadhan* and make it a means of us acquiring *taqwa*.
Aameen.

ربنا تقبل منا انك أنت السميع العليم وتب علينا انك أنت التواب الرحيم ،
وصلى الله تعالى على خير خلقه سيدنا ومولانا محمد و آله و صحبه أجمعين ،
برحمتك يا أرحم الرحمين

